



The Fiction Documentary: Interviews with the Makers of "A Married Couple"

Alan Rosenthal; Allan King; Richard Leiterman; Arla Saare

Film Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 4. (Summer, 1970), pp. 9-33.

Stable URL:

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Film Quarterly is currently published by University of California Press.

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enclosed group (gangsters and entertainers) in *Some Like It Hot*, there is no friction between attempt and achievement. *Ace in the Hole*, for all its power, suggests that Wilder's talents are better attuned to the purely ridiculous than to

the appallingly ridiculous. But what gives his comedy the urgency of a judgment on life is the blackness at the core of his heart. On with *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* . . .

ALAN ROSENTHAL

The Fiction Documentary

INTERVIEWS WITH THE MAKERS OF A MARRIED COUPLE

Though it is not yet in regular U.S. release, A Married Couple is already widely known as one of the most important of recent films using cinéma-vérité techniques. Where Allan King's previous film, Warrendale, was a remarkably intense portrait of life in a center for disturbed children, A Married Couple traces several months of a marriage in crisis: tensions, hang-ups, joys. Richard Leiterman's camera catches humdrum moments, revelatory moments of intimacy, and shattering fights. As edited by Arla Saare, the film is alternately funny, savage, and moving. The use of nonscripted, unstaged material to arrive at a fictional film is perhaps the central problem of film-making today—it raises difficult philosophical, technical, artistic, and personal issues. The following interviews bear out the originality of the approach in A Married Couple, and show something of the differing perspectives brought to even a small-scale, highly personal production by the creative individuals taking part.

THE PRODUCER-DIRECTOR: ALLAN KING

I was born in Vancouver, B.C. in 1930. I went to the University of British Columbia and took Honors Philosophy. Then I drove a taxi for nine months, went to Europe for a year and a half, traveling, hitchhiking, the sort of thing that one

did then, and finally got a job in television in Vancouver as a production assistant. I did live television for two years, but in fact after six months switched primarily into film. The first film was *Skid Row*, then three or four more in Vancouver. Then I left Vancouver.

What were your jobs in these films, director, producer, production-assistant?

Yes, director. We were very lucky out there because there weren't very many experienced people in the country and television expanded more rapidly than the availability of trained personnel. I was also heavily involved in film societies in Vancouver when I was a teenager, so one got to see just about everything that was of interest to see. After the Vancouver stint I went abroad and started independent production, first in Spain, then settled in London, and built up an office and production group there. I came back to Canada in 1967, and I've been settled here ever since.

How does your group work? As a cooperative?

More or less. Basically we all function as freelancers, except that we work together, are grouped together in one House, and pay a small percentage of our fees to the House. We all have shares in the House, and the House owns the equipment.

How did the concept of A Married Couple arise? What was the first sparking point for it?

I'm not really sure. I don't think there is ever a single point. I suppose the first point of real action was when I was pretty well to the end of *Warrendale*, and wondering what I was going to do next. I knew there was a spot open for an hour-and-a-half film on television at that time, and I thought I would like to do a film about a marriage, about a married couple, recording them over eight to ten weeks—to get some sense, in a way that I don't think has been possible before, of what happens between a couple. One knows that from one's own experience, one knows that from a certain kind of observation of friends which is pretty limited, one knows it from parents, from literature, drama, the arts, but those are all different kinds of knowledge, all useful in their own particular way. I thought it would be fascinating and illuminating to stay with the couple and observe.

Most particularly, I was concerned with a marriage in crisis, and wanted to observe the kinds of ways in which a couple misperceive each other, and carry into the relationship anxieties, childhood patterns, all the things that make up one's own personality and character. But these inevitably distort the other person,

and make true intimacy or true connection difficult. As that difficulty gets greater, conflicts and tensions develop in a marriage so that it becomes less and less rewarding. That is what I wanted to explore. It was something I had been absorbed with since childhood. It had struck me, even when I was a kid in the thirties, that marriage didn't seem to be the kind of rewarding thing in reality that I read about in books, or fantasized was going to be mine when I grew up. It puzzled me that people always seemed to get less from marriage than they wanted, and less than they would like. My own parents separated when I was a kid; perhaps that gave me a particularly exacerbated view of marriage and made me rather more skeptical or more pessimistic or more aware of, and anxious about conflicts and difficulties in marriage, than say a child whose family had been fairly secure.

As the concept grew, did you have any particular friends or individuals in mind who you thought would be suitable for the film?

Not exactly. Billy and Antoinette, whom I ultimately chose, were possibilities, as were many other friends, but first I started talking to a lot of couples I got to through psychiatrists, social workers, and various counselors. Altogether, I talked fairly intensively with about ten couples. I didn't, during that early period, talk to Billy and Antoinette. Finally I decided I would talk to them and see if they were interested.

What was their reaction to the concept of living with a camera?

They had been fascinated for a long time with the idea of being in a film. At one stage or another in their lives both of them had dabbled in amateur or semiprofessional theater, and many of their friends are in the arts, so it always interested them as a possibility. When they knew I was making a film about a marriage in crisis, or a marriage in conflict, theirs was not in that critical a stage, or at least they didn't acknowledge it. When I finally approached them, Antoinette was ready to be involved in the movie, but Billy was very reluctant. He said, "Our marriage isn't in that much of a crisis at the moment, so you would have to make a

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film simply about an everyday marriage." My own supposition was that the conflicts I sensed to be there, were there, and that they would emerge.

One is very conscious in the film of the style of repartee, and wit of the dialogue which goes on about nonessential things. Was this in the back of your mind when you ultimately chose them?

I guess it was the major factor—it was the plus that offset the minus that I was concerned about, plus the fact that they can be very funny, and very playful with each other, verbally anyway, and so that was a great advantage. I think a film like this, unrelieved by any lightness, could be very powerful, but it could also run the risk of being overpoweringly depressing and heavy.

Can we go now to preshooting production problems, planning, that sort of stage.

I had already chosen the cameraman during the year I was looking for couples and raising money. I had Richard in mind and Chris to do the sound. I needed Arla Saare to do the editing. I seem to work in a similar sort of pattern every time I set up a film, or once a film starts to go. Once I've had the notion and decide that is what I want to do, I work out a budget. The first thing to see is whether the project is financially possible, and then where am I going to get the money. So I was occupied with that pretty early on, and went through various attempts, and routes to finance the film.

First, it was going to be done as a three country coproduction for television. When the Canadian element, the CBC, dropped out, I decided to raise the money privately. A friend of mine thought he could do that and had a go at it, but it didn't work out. So then I went around and simply borrowed money. We set up a company in which the shareholders put in the investment to pay the heart of the cost of the production. They basically put up \$75,000-\$85,000 and we sold television rights to follow theatrical distribution in Canada and in England, which made the balance of our production budget. And at that point we were set. Actually, as the film developed, we went way over bud-



get. One of the difficulties is that if you take a year to raise money, your budget is already 10% under right off the bat. We were budgeted at \$130,000-\$140,000, and we spent \$203,000. This was partly because we went over in time, and partly because we shot a lot more film than I had anticipated.

Having sort of settled the financial questions, raised the money, we finally decided to ask Billy and Antoinette. After they accepted, we worked out a fee for them, which was basically union scale, which came in the end to about \$5,000, for the two of them, plus a small percentage of the profits of the film. Though I have generally no particular commitment to a way of working or an ideology of working, I decided not to intervene in this film, not to direct, not to ask or require anything from Billy and Antoinette, but to allow them to take any initiatives that they might wish to take; this 'nonintervention' also covered Richard, and my soundman Chris Wangler. We would simply spend as much time as we could physically manage with the couple and record when we felt like it.

We established, also, that while we were all friends and knew each other, it wouldn't work if we had dinner with them, or if Antoinette was obliged to make coffee, or provide the kind of hospitality that one normally extends to people in one's house. We decided to dispense with all this, and to avoid conversation with Bill and Antoinette as much as possible, so that interactions of that kind wouldn't interfere with our ability to observe and record.

In making Warrendale you spent three or four weeks with the cameras on location without doing any shooting; did you employ the same method here?

In Warrendale it was necessary for me to find out something about the children as I didn't know them very well. I didn't know them at all when I started, and they needed a fair amount of time to look at me and get used to me and decide where I was going to fit into their lives. With Billy and Antoinette, that amount of time wasn't necessary, but we did need a bit of time not so much to get them un-camera-conscious or unself-conscious, but for them to work into more intimate feelings, the kind of real expression of strongly felt things. That took a lot of time. What we did do, was spend about two weeks with them lighting the house. We could have probably done it much faster but we sort of puttered and fiddled around.

Can you be more explicit on the lighting?

As with Warrendale we lit the entire house, which was basically the way we did most of our shooting. We had our own power source from the mains. We put a whole new power system in really, so that we could go in first thing in the morning and throw the switch and the whole house would be lit. Actually it took a fair while to work out a lighting pattern that allows you to shoot 360°, and shoot so that you are not hitting your own lights, or throwing shadows and all those kinds of problems; there is a certain amount of trial and error to that. Also, you can't really anticipate what are the most frequent patterns of movement until you've spent some time with people and get an instinctive sense of where they are going to move and when. That all took about two or three weeks. We also had to adjust the house a bit, and do some decorating. The front room was all walnut paneling, which is very very dark and just soaked up light. So we put in light paneling instead.

When Billy and Antoinette went on a three-week holiday to Maine and Vermont we followed, taking an extra lighting man. We had him go three days before to rig the two physical locations so that they would be all set, and we

would just have to trim, so that again we would have the least possible technical interference with the lights.

Can we get into the actual shooting, and so on?

Clearly the ideal would be to spend 24 hours a day at the house, but that would have meant two crews and you would split your style. While there were variations, basically our pattern was to spend as much time with them as they were together with each other. Richard and Chris and the camera assistant would go in early in the morning, turn on the lights, go upstairs, and be around when Billy and Antoinette woke up. We would stay through breakfast until Billy went to work. Sometimes, though not often, we would stay with Billy, or with Antoinette and Bogart, and sometimes would go with Billy to work, and film at work. But the general pattern was to leave them at 9:30 or 10 o'clock. Richard and Chris and David would go home and get some sleep and a meal, and then come back about 4 o'clock to be there for 5 o'clock when Billy came home. Then they'd stay all through the evening until Billy and Antoinette finally went to sleep, and then back again the next morning. Of course, weekends were very tough. You would start at 5 o'clock Friday afternoon, and they would get maybe seven or eight hours sleep, and time off in the middle of Friday night and Saturday night and Sunday night—that was very exhausting.

For the first three or four weeks I was around the house a lot. Later, I found it worked best for me to stay away. A director in that sort of situation is a bit irrelevant. You need enough time to observe a lot of things and you drop in. But there is no need, for me at any rate, to stand and tell a cameraman, "Point here, point there, turn on here, turn off there." All you do really is interfere.

Did you discuss with Richard the kind of things you were looking for?

I know Richard's style, and he knows my style, because we have worked together for years. So the question of style has been worked out over a long time. We had talked about the problems that anyone has shooting dialogue be-

tween two people with one camera—whether to pan back and forth and so on—before we started filming. It was difficult for Richard to dictate where the camera was going rather than have it dictated by the dialogue. But he very quickly got onto that. What would happen is that we would talk a great deal about the rushes. Either he would see them, or certainly I would always see them. We'd say this or that didn't work, or that seems to be working very well, something seems to be happening here, how do you feel it—and so we would do a great deal of talking on the phone, or before or after work, or wherever it was necessary, so that we could check with each other, on what we felt was significant. In the end I very specifically gave Richard a credit as Associate Director, because the contribution that he made to the filming was so very, very important. There was no way of doing that kind of a film without an exceptional person shooting, because he had to make the basic choices of when he was going to shoot, and when not. We talked a lot about strategy, and something about tactics as we were working, but often it was the choice that Richard made, and in a very real sense, he is the associate director.

How much does the camera interfere? How much do people put on for the camera?

It depends on the cameraman. If you get a dumb, insensitive, obtrusive cameraman, the interference is enormous. If you have a sensitive, intelligent, quiet, responsive, unobtrusive, and unjudging, unpersonally critical cameraman, or camera crew, then not only is the camera not inhibitive, but it stimulates the couple to talk, in the same way an analyst or therapist does. You can talk if you want to, you don't have to talk if you don't want to, you do what you want. If you choose to put up smoke screens, or you choose to put on a dialogue or you try to hide something—this would be evident to anybody with any sort of sensitivity. It isn't possible for people to produce material out of thin air irrelevant to their character. Whatever occurs is relevant to the character, and it gives us that overall sense we have of the person. So I felt for a long time that we were not concerned with the question,

"Is it the real person?" or those kinds of questions. These are really ways in which an audience or some elements of an audience tend to evade the actual feelings they are getting from the film. "Is that really real?"—what the hell does that mean? Either the film means something to you, or it doesn't. On the question again of interference, I think it is well to allow the person to express stuff in perhaps a little more concentrated period of time.

Did you sense that anyone was putting on an act for the camera?

There were various places in the film where they do, but there are two kinds of acting. If you say, "Are they acting for the camera?" you can say, "No," and a little while along you would have to say, "Yes." It depends on how much space you have in which to explain. They performed for the camera in the same way they perform for friends. Friends come together, and often they would get into 15 minutes of bantering back and forth, teasing each other—they'd have a mock row, or they'd set up a whole line of dialogue which they could carry for 15 or 20 minutes as a way of entertaining themselves and their friends. You can see them do that in the film.

The only thing one has to remember is that we all, at all times, and to varying degrees perform, or perform as if we were different people. At different times we are different people with different people. I am aware of myself behaving a little differently with a businessman, with a student, with a critic, with my office staff, with my girlfriend, or with my parents. Each of those situations provides a different context and you behave differently. Ideally, when you are totally your own person, you are always the same, you are a consistent character throughout, in all transactions; but that's not the way most people are most of the time.

Did they impose any restrictions on you? Obviously you would be getting some very intimate material. Did they see the rushes, or did they only see the final print?

Billy wanted the right to veto anything that he thought was unbearably embarrassing. We had a long protracted negotiation about it, and

I was profoundly reluctant to allow them to do that—oddly enough not so much because I really felt it would be exercised, but because I thought they would in fact deprive themselves of some of the benefits which would occur from the filming. If they were going to have that right, there would be some area of cheating in the film and some area of withholding. However, Billy felt that he could not be uninhibited, could not be free, unless he had some protection. Oddly enough, Antoinette didn't ask for that until Billy had thought of it, and so she said if Billy has it, I want it. In fact, the right wasn't exercised. I didn't allow them to see any film except a little bit to show them that there were images on the celluloid, and it was going all right. I didn't allow them to see any film until we had finished shooting, and then they screened all 70 hours.

At that stage did they want to cut anything out?

No, they didn't. They didn't have the right of editing or anything like that.

Now, if you can come to the point of selection. The film is mainly Billy, Antoinette and Bogart—one sees very few friends except for an evening when Antoinette goes out with her girlfriend, and on the occasion of the party. Now, friends must have been over at other times. Was this limitation a choice on your part?

Yes, the stuff with other people just didn't work out. It wasn't significant. If you want dramatic structure, you want interchanges with other people if they are significant. But there wasn't very much happening with the other friends. For instance, Antoinette was not having an affair with the husband of one of their friends, or one of the couples they were friendly with. Had she been, of course that would have been very pertinent to the film. But just having people over for dinner usually ends up with no more than a scene of people sitting down and having dinner, and it's not very interesting.

Sometimes something explosive will happen at a party, particularly if there is a camera on. People get angry at the lights and so on, or resent other people being the focus of the film. In the first party we filmed, in Toronto, nothing

very significant happened. The party in Maine was different. If I were using this technique again, and I wanted to involve more people, then I would have to find a particular way in which they were interacting with the other people in the film so that episodes would occur which were emotionally significant.

If we can move on to editing and structure. You shot 70 hours, you use an hour and a half. Were the choices difficult regarding what to omit?

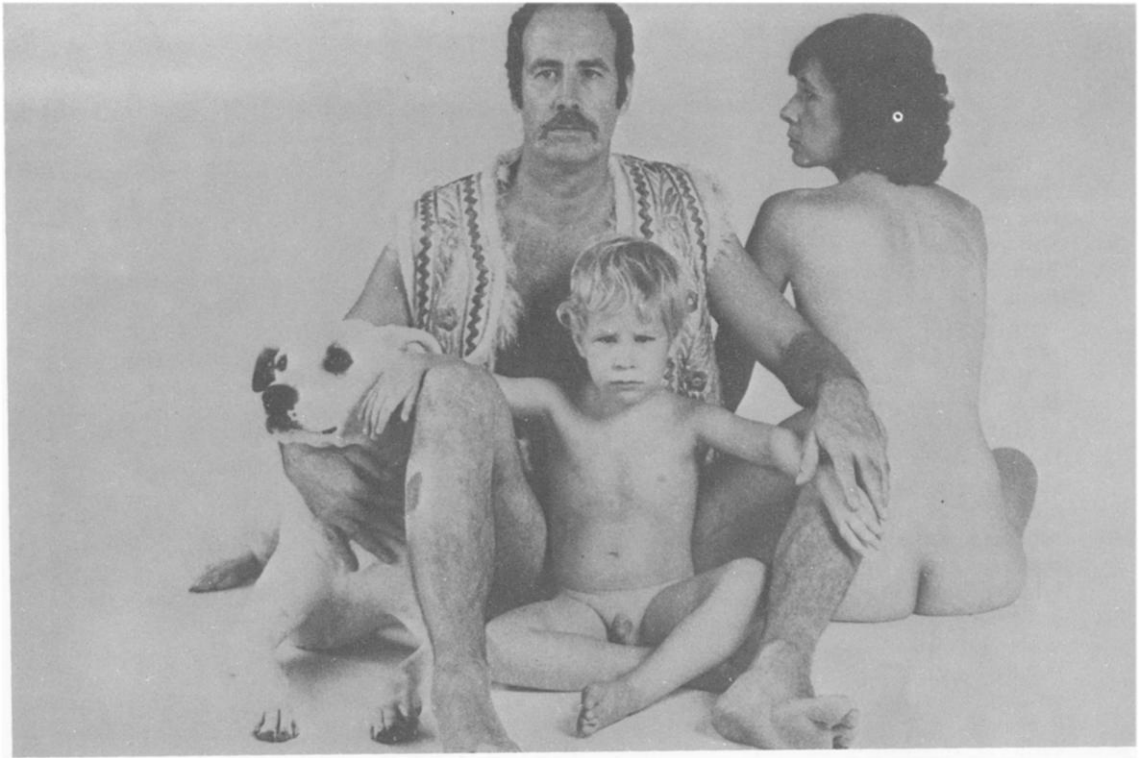
I can't remember—my memory is a bit foggy. I have a bad time once I've cut a sequence out; by and large, I forget it even existed. Yet when you're looking at a rough cut and you argue about what's to come out, you say, "I can't take that sequence out, I've got to have that sequence," but once you take it out, you very seldom miss it. However, I can't remember very much, I can't remember sequences, but there must be some which we had in and then took out. It was really much more a question of tightening sections, and making them work as sequences, and more than that, making the overall structure work.

Is the final film in chronological order?

No—the opening of the film was shot about two-thirds the way through, the breakfast scene was shot halfway through. Basically, the main arch of action is at the end of the film when they wake up—after they have had that moment of intimacy when she's sitting on his lap crying, and they wake up the next morning, and have a great fight and he throws her out of the house—that whole passage happened the week before we finished filming, and it was what we were waiting for. Not that it had to be a fight, it might have been a very happy episode; but you wait for one significant arch of events that hang together and give you a core. The holiday, and when they're at the lake and so on, and the party around that—they all occurred very early in the filming and are actually unrelated to the rest. All I do is take episodes and put them into a dramatic structure that works for me.

So you are aiming toward a kind of emotional fiction?

Yes. It is very often the case that episode A



is put together with episode B to produce a feeling of C, when in reality they don't have that connection. However, if feeling C doesn't have a feeling relationship or isn't true of the characters, then it won't work. What I'm doing is finding conjunctions of events which create for me the feeling I have about that couple and about life, and what I want to express.

One has to be very, very clear. Billy and Antoinette in the film are not Billy and Antoinette Edwards, the couple who exist and live at 323 Rushton Rd. They are characters, images on celluloid in a film drama. To say that they are in any other sense true, other than being true to our own experience of the world and people we have known and ourselves, is philosophical nonsense. There is no way 90 minutes in a film of Billy and Antoinette can be the same as the actual real life of Billy and Antoinette.

Did they make any comments on the time rearrangement in the final film?

No, because they clearly understood that we would do that. But it was hard at first for An-

toinette to handle. For example, there is little shown where she is very giving or very tender; there is little shown of how she is with other people, which is often very warm; little is shown of how she is with her child, or the fact that she's a good cook. At other times and in other circumstances, she is all those things. In the middle of a major crisis or conflict, she couldn't be very giving, and much of the time was very tense; it was a very tough time. So she comes out of the film, or rather as the character in the film, as someone caught up in those devastating demands of that moment.

Can we come back to the dramatic structure and your preparation work with Arla. I am thinking of it as a dramatist, how you think it's going to work. For example, you have Antoinette talking with her girlfriend about sexual hangups and relationships. Much later in the film this ties up with her talking to the red-shirted guy at the party, and the final discussion with Billy. Can you tell me what choices you were playing around with?

First, I think you perceive certain kinds of things, certain things that happened that week, and seemed to be something that was a consistent preoccupation, say of Antoinette or Billy. First of all, we went through all the material twice (we went through all the rushes as we were shooting) we went through it all once or twice after that, and then chucked out 50 hours.

What were you looking for, when you went through the material?

Stuff that connects with other stuff, episodes that connect and illuminate each other. Stuff that contrasts, and stuff that is alive. The trouble with a lot of shooting is that nothing happens, so it's aborted; or you miss half of it because you come in late. You end up with a set of sequences which are alive and are funny, moving, sad, and have emotional values. Those are what you start with, and you then try to find an order of those events in which the feelings are amplified, and amplified and amplified, until they've reached a peak. Then you try to resolve them again—rather I suppose in the way you construct a piece of music.

Can you tell me how you work with Arla?

Basically, it seems to me that you and the editor always perceive things a little differently. The director has a different notion of what's happening than the editor does. But as I say, I chucked out about 50 hours so we had about 20 to work with, and if Arla felt she needed something or was stuck, she would go back into that 50 hours; but we then basically screened the 20 hours. We had a list of what those sequences were, and a rough idea of what the order of events would be. The 20 hours represented roughly 20 sequences, 20 episodes, and each was roughly an hour long.

We would sit down in the morning and go through an hour. I would say what I liked, and what I thought the shape was, and Arla would say what she liked and what she thought the shape was; and we would usually very quickly agree on the rough shape of the sequence. Then she would go ahead, pull it out and cut it. The next morning we would come back and screen the rough cut of that sequence, and decide that such and such worked, and such and such

didn't, or what needed ordering or how we could fix it; and then she would do that, or sometimes she simply set it aside and we would go on to the next one. Arla works extremely quickly, and we would tend to do almost a sequence a day until we had the rough assembly; and then we started polishing.

How long did the assembly take you?

The assembly, which was about four or five hours, took about six weeks. Then we were stuck for a month trying to get a shape that would work, and we tried juggling it this way and that way.

Can we tie it down to specifics. What were the alternate shapes you had in mind?

It doesn't seem so much like alternatives as you either have the feeling it works or it doesn't work; and if it doesn't work, it's not an alternative, and you keep juggling around until finally it does. But for example, there are two or three major fights in this film. There's the first little fight about the harpsichord. This is a joke fight, but sort of sets up many of the key strains that emerge later in the film; there's the car fight which is a very bitter fight, but isn't violent and sort of has a semi-resolve to it, and is left with a hooker at the end of it; and then there's the fight where he throws her out of the house. The harpsichord scene isn't a major fight—it's just sort of a way into the film. If you have one big fight at the beginning and one big fight at the end, and the first one is sort of left open and unresolved, all through the middle part you wait for the threads to be picked up. There may be all sorts of little threads in the middle which are significant, but you are really waiting to see what big thing is going to happen next, so it's a matter of how you get those threads to develop and amplify each other.

The biggest problem was to put the car fight where it was able to pick up the threads of conflict, so that the earlier clues were expanded and amplified. Another problem was how to make Antoinette's desire for other relationships apparent, rather than merely talked about. She discusses them with her girlfriend, but the discussion is transferred into action when she starts the flirtation with that guy in the red shirt.

You get the development of intensity of their arguments, which serve to increase the tension, but you also have several other sequences, which in a sense, could be placed anywhere—the holiday sequence, and an explanation of Billy at work. How did you play around with these in the order?

It is largely how much relaxation you want from your tension, and so it's merely a matter of gauging the emotional charge, or the degree of relaxation that you want before you build to a higher degree. The choices, ultimately, have simply to do with relaxing and heightening tension.

Jack Gold, the English director, has said that when he does a straight documentary, he may have 20 sequences. He then puts those on cards, and in a sense he edits the cards. Do you work at all in this way?

I just jot ideas down on paper: that feels right, this, then this, then this, and you work out a sequence, and then you think, "But if I do that, this isn't going to work here because it's too early, or it's too late, or it doesn't connect with what follows after," and then you try another juggle. And whether you do it on cards, or do it by numbers on a piece of paper, it is the same process.

I asked you before whether Billy and Antoinette had the power of censorship. Now I am wondering if there were points when you were using your own taste—saying, "No, I've got this scene, but I don't really think it should be used as a matter of taste." Can you give me some examples there?

Well, at that time, Billy had been going to a psychiatrist to help resolve some of the problems he was having. I recorded four sessions with the psychiatrist, and they were absolutely fascinating, and indeed hair-raising as there was some extraordinary material involved. But I decided not to use the material; in some ways it was like a red herring. When a person is talking to a psychiatrist and talking about something that they feel is quite horrific that they've done, an audience may seize upon that and jump to all sorts of conclusions about the person—which are misleading, or allow them to classify the

other person, or to depersonalize the other person. So I didn't use these scenes. They were very tempting, and there was a lot of revealing material in them, but I felt they were misleading.

Billy is very funny when he is reading some advertising. Did you catch much of him at work?

We spent two-three-four days with him at work, and there were some other funny passages, but you are really looking for that passage that you can get in a minute or 30 seconds which stands for all the things. There are several other episodes, but those were the best ones. There was a long talk with some guy in Saskatchewan. They were planning a Centennial campaign for Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan wanted to look like Expo, but for only \$200,000 or something like that, and the dialogue was very funny.

I was a little unhappy about a couple of sequences that technically didn't work, showing Billy's strength and his forcefulness with other people, because he's rather a different person at work than he is at home. At home, at that point anyway, he was a little more insecure about various kinds of things than he was at work. That extra dimension would have been nice to get included. We did do one other thing. I had a screening with some friends, 30 or 40 people, when I had the first sort of rough cut. This was in order to see it with an audience, and get a sense of the way other people responded. I did it again in the final cut, and then once more, and they were very helpful. It's not so much that people can tell you how to fix a film or what's not working, but you get the sense of an additional perspective, which is very helpful.

Can you remember any of the things said after the rough cut?

Yes. There was a lot of imbalance in the reaction to Billy and Antoinette. At one time, people were generally much more responsive to Antoinette, and then there was another point at which they were much more responsive to Billy, and I wanted a balance. It is still the case in the final film that it almost acts as a Rorschach test. People either identify with Billy or with Antoinette, or reject them both, or think

they are both marvelous, and you get everything in between that; but you eventually have to decide what is the balance for yourself, and part of that you get from the way the audience is responding. It's also very helpful where jokes are concerned—what's working, and what's very funny to you but is not funny to anybody else, how much pause you need after for the laughter to subside, so that you don't lose lines. We finally blew the film up to 35mm when we had a cut that was one hour and 57 minutes. I knew it was long, but I got to the point that I was too close to the film to decide how much more to cut it; so we blew it up at that point, and had a number of screenings in New York with other people, and then I cut another 20 minutes, and got it down to 97 minutes.

Was this basically just shortening sequences, or taking sequences out?

Shortening—we didn't take any sequences out, we just tightened up the slack. I took out parts of sequences—after the major fight, after dinner, and after their very funny episode when Bogart picks up a little piece of shit on the floor, which is an extraordinary reliever of the tension of the moment. There was another sequence when they are talking on the bed upstairs. The telephone rings, Antoinette wants to answer it, but Billy doesn't want her to leave the bed and get out of the discussion that they are having, and they have a fight about that. It was a fascinating exchange, but it was just one too many, and I thought, I just cannot take one more fight, so I took it out. In order to tighten up another sequence I cut one bit that I really regret: Billy and Antoinette are in bed the second time in the film. She has been in her bed, and he takes her into his bed. He wants to be intimate with her, and she rejects him; I shortened it a bit and in consequence lost a passage where one really experienced more strongly the anguish and humiliation that Billy felt in being rejected. One still gets a lot out of the sequence, but is a little diminished.

You said you went way over budget. What are the things that blew up the budget?

We budgeted for seven weeks of shooting, and we shot for ten; we were budgeted for

80,000 feet of film, and I shot virtually 140,000 feet. Those were the major things. My own time was double what I said it would be. Editing time wasn't as much as we had anticipated. Our lighting costs were more; we had the trip to Vermont and Maine which wasn't in the budget. Promotion costs were a lot more than I had anticipated—I had budgeted \$14,000 to promote the film, and I spent \$30,000.

When you finished the film, how did you go about selling it? You said you had a certain number of precommitments on television, but these commitments pay relatively little. How did you begin to get the money back?

It wasn't too much of a problem in Canada, except for the amount of time required to do it and the amount of speaking engagements and screenings you have to have. I find with a film that it helps a lot if you get out to many locations, wherever the theater happens to be. You go along to see the film, to see the press, and so on, and it all helps. The main problem is getting good distribution. This wasn't much of a problem in Canada because we had that settled. But we had a long, long battle with censorship in Ontario which was very costly, and took a lot of time.

What were the problems brought up in censorship?

The language, which was virtually unprecedented in Canada. The amount of swearing in the film hadn't been used in a film before in Canada—that was really the crux of the problem. The first censor to have to tackle it had a good deal of difficulty deciding whether it was going to arouse a great public reaction, and whether it was within the tolerances of community standards, which is the real basis of most censorship.

How did you eventually win them around—what were the compromises?

I made three cuts in Ontario. I haven't had to make any cuts thereafter in any of the other provinces so far, and no cuts in the States because there just isn't any censorship in the States any more—or at least no government or state censorship. The key to persuading the censor was that after it became a public controversy,

it was clear that more people were going to be upset by the cuts in the film than would be upset by the language in the film. It tends to be a political thing.

You said Canadian distribution was easy—what about American?

America was much harder, and we still haven't found an adequate solution to the problem. I have also found greater difficulty with the film in the States, and I am not quite sure why. I noticed very early on that our screenings in New York had quite a different flavor than in Canada. People in the States seem to find the film more threatening, personally threatening, personally heavy and painful. I would guess this could be, particularly in New York, because personal relationships there are more strenuous and less secure, and therefore the film seems more painful. In the early American reviews, for example, there was virtually no mention of the fact that the film is very funny in the first half—virtually no mention whatsoever. The reviews have been of three kinds: from young critics, very responsive and very good reviews; from sort of middle-aged critics or middle-aged married people, an intense involvement in the film, but the reviews tend to say as much about the reviewer as they do about the film (at least that is what we drew from between the lines); with older critics, and this particularly affected us in New York with Judith Crist and a couple of others, a rejection of the film as ugly, and the characters as distasteful. There was a total inability to take in the film and accept it. In Canada, audiences are a lot more open and easy, especially if there is a very large house, which somehow socializes the experience. In the States, there seems to be a great taste for fantasy at the moment—everybody seems to want an escape. *Easy Rider* is enormously popular. It's a good film but I often wonder how much of its appeal is that it romanticizes and fantasizes an experience.

Has the film covered its costs yet?

No. It will eventually in Canada, and in England. What will happen in the States is still very much up in the air. But I am not terribly optimistic about the States.

This question of using vérité technique, and the nonfiction drama, where do you think it is going from here? Do you think you will use the process again?

I think I will probably use it on my next film—I am quite sure I will—but more as a way of setting up and recording that kind of feeling exchange: the kind of dynamic that arises out of direct interchange between the characters and the film. But in the next film, I don't think the people will have had actual past relationships with each other. They will be characters that I've deliberately put together in a film, and asked to interact and interrelate.

THE CAMERAMAN/ASSOC. DIRECTOR: RICHARD LEITERMAN

Getting into film was something I didn't decide on. Film has never been anything that I really thought about as a life career. I didn't finish university—I went two years, and then bummed around Europe doing a number of jobs. I met Allan King in Europe, and the work he was doing then was documentaries for the CBC—very low budget—and I asked him if there was some way I could get on with him. It seemed like a pretty good thing. They travelled a lot, and I was interested in travelling and seeing a lot of people. It's kind of a joke now in documentary or films, when people say "Oh, aren't you lucky, to be able to travel so many places and meet so many fantastic people, and do so many interesting things!" But then, it seemed a pretty romantic idea. Anyway, Allan didn't have anything for me at the time, and suggested maybe I find a film school and get the basic grounding, as I had no idea of what still photography was about, let alone movies. He suggested the British Film Institute, suggested trying to get in with the CBC or NFB, and things like that. At any rate, I came back to Vancouver and took the University's first summer course on "be your own film director in six weeks."

It was Saturdays and Sundays for six weeks. They had an old Bolex, and a Bell & Howell windup. Stan Fox had set the course up, and it was in its first year. So I went to that and

learned basics about film, and what made an image on a piece of film, how it was cut, re-winds, all that. It was a general, basic, all-round course, and we turned out a little seven-minute film. They asked us why we were in the course, and I firmly said that there was a lot of things that could be done a lot more interestingly, more artistically and better than were being turned out by people in documentaries and news, and things like that. I did the course, and bought my own little Bolex windup with some money I had, and shot a couple of news stories out in Vancouver.

They were just freak stories. One was a storm. I lived at the waterfront, so I just went out the front door and shot some waves, sea gulls, and water pouring down, and sold it to the Vancouver news for \$35. I thought it was pretty terrific—an easy way to make a dollar. During the next couple of months I tried to do more of that but I didn't have any luck. CBC wasn't interested, and there weren't any more freak storms.

So I went back to the job I had, which was out in the tugboats.

Meanwhile I had written Allan and said if there was any chance that I could get on just for subsistence fees, just as second camera assistant or whatever, to let me know, and I would come over to London. I told him it wouldn't cost him any money and I did know something about the business now. I was very lucky. He called back about two months later to say I could come in as second cameraman on one of their

CBC documentaries about the common market. So I got on second camera with an Auricon which I had never seen before and didn't know how to use, and it went like that. Allan said if it worked out it might be worthwhile me staying in London. If it didn't work out there would be enough money for me and my wife to get back to tugboating or whatever. However, it panned out nicely. I stayed in London, and I got a credit by CBC news in London, and did a fair amount of work for them.

Most of this photography, was it self-taught, or did you learn from the other cameraman?

On the first job, the one with Allan, the senior cameraman was a very good, a very painstaking lighting man, and as I had never done any lighting as such, he took the time to show me the basic lighting set-ups, how to put a back light in, and a fill light down the hall if you're shooting one room and seeing through to another. So it was kind of an apprenticeship except that I wasn't looked on as an apprentice. I had to learn and shoot at the same time. It came very easy somehow, I don't know particularly how, and it worked out extremely well.

Allan's films would come up about once every six months or so, when he would get one of his own productions going, so in between we were shooting news for CBC out of London and Paris, or we'd go to Germany. It was interesting shooting news. I think I learned more about how to shoot a documentary in the way that I felt a documentary should be shot. The stuff I had done previously for CBC on documentary, was kind of a set-up deal where you have person A walk from here to there to show you what was in the background, which might be called C; they would sit down on a chair which was already pre-lit, and go into what was supposed to be spontaneous talk about whatever the social problem was. That wasn't my idea of doing documentary.

What year are we talking about?

This was in '61. Basically we would go out to do a story, find out where the action was and shoot it, and shoot it as many ways as possible. You had to be fast. You had a lighting set-up to do, you had to go bong, bong, bong, and have



your lights up. The guy came in and you shot it. You tried to frame it right, you tried to make it look as nice as possible, and ten minutes later he was gone. If it was action news, you worked the same way. There was no director to tell you where the action was, you were on your own. Sometimes, you'd have a sort of briefing, and off you would go, with an Arriflex or whatever, and shoot it; it was the kind of experience which I found invaluable in learning how to shoot straight documentaries.

What were the key documentaries you shot during '61 and after?

The one I liked best was a profile on Lynn Seymour, a Canadian ballerina who was working at Covent Gardens; I shot it and Allan directed. That worked out very nicely—she's a lovely girl, and it went well. You did walk-in, you did portable synch, all kinds of things. In 1964 I came over to America and shot *One More River*, which was directed by my brother for Intertel. I guess that was the first long show that I did on my own. Doug was there a lot of the time, but a lot of the time there was just Beryl Fox and myself scooting around the Southern states, looking for it. Then I got into a series of Intertels, for NET. One was on the color problem in Britain called *Colour in Britain* directed by Mike Sklar. Then we did schools in England and America, which was a deadly show.

Did you work freelance the whole time?

All this time I was freelance. I've been with Allan King Associates since it originated in England, but on a freelance basis. I worked for the company, but I could also go out and hustle on my own. I could work for whomsoever I wished. I'm not under any obligation to Allan King Associates. This has always been the way with all of us in England.

Can we get on to A Married Couple. Can you tell me how Allan approached you and discussed the problem with you?

This was after *Warrendale*. Allan said the next film he did he wanted to be a real film about a married couple. It sounded a very interesting idea, but I wasn't sure if it would come off or not. I wasn't sure how I would feel about

walking into a couple's house and being there, filming them, recording them.

I gather it was fairly clear from the beginning that it was to be a marriage in crisis; how did you feel about that element?

It was a bit upsetting to me. Due to my being out of town an awful lot on various assignments and various pictures, I did not have the ideal marriage, although it's going well, and we have overcome a lot of the differences. But to go and observe some married couple in some kind of difficulty, well who needs that. I could just shoot in my own house. It did seem to me though that perhaps out of this would come things that would be particularly interesting, not only to myself, but to a great audience especially in America, where marriages seem to be off and on, in and out, almost like the tide. If we could get something down on film that would be good, that people could look at and say, "All right, they're not much different from us, and they are still making it, and if they're not making it, why aren't they?" They could look at themselves through Billy and Antoinette and find out why some of the niggly things blow up into such great things. Maybe it's a kind of visual therapy. Basically that's what we came around to, and said, now let's do it and as real as we can. When Billy and Antoinette were chosen, I felt well that's fine, I know them. I knew them from when we lived in Spain, but it wasn't a close knowledge. They are both vocal, somewhat inclined to be exhibitionists, but pleasant, and they seemed right. I guess I would sooner have gone into their house than into a stranger's.

Once they agreed that you could shoot there, how did you set up preparing the photographic side of it?

That was difficult. The first two weeks we were around, testing and thinking. We wanted to be able to shoot anywhere in the house, and we wanted to be able to go indoors and outdoors, and not be too affected by changing film stock or magazines. That was pretty much the reason for using the fast Ektachrome daylight stock, so that I could go in and out, and could make use of the daylight coming in the windows as supplementary lighting. We set up

lights around the house, and made special brackets to fit in the living room, and special brackets to put in the dining room, and upstairs. We tried to hide them behind closet doors, hang them from the ceiling, and put blue dichroic filters over them to balance with the daylight coming in the windows. It was a trial, but still I couldn't get enough useable light after setting it all up because the dichroics take away approximately one-third of the illumination. There just wasn't enough light in the house, but to put any more light in would have cooked us, literally, because it was summer and it was hot. We therefore went back to the method of using tungsten, and taking the dichroics off, and gelling all the windows with filters, and using tungsten light inside. So we ended up shooting on tungsten film, and when we went outside, we had to change and put a conversion filter on.

One of our basic things was to make it as natural as possible, and as far as thinking of key light or fills or anything like that, that was pretty much impossible because we never knew where the action was going to take place. My next thing was to put my lights in the places where I could put them, which were in the corners of the rooms, mostly to give me access to shoot all round the room and in any direction without catching light. The odd time I caught a flare was when they were hung from the ceiling and from corner brackets. There was no key light, it was all fill. Well, let's say it was all key light with some bounced light for fill, consisting of 1000 watt adjustable floods in three of the four corners, going in toward the center of the room. In addition we bounced minilight 650's from the ceiling and had photofloods in the practical light fixtures like table lamps and stand lamps. In total in the living room I guess we had about 4500 watts, including some Lowell lights which I found most practical because you can put a 500 watt flood in, and gauze it a bit, and you can fill out areas and hide that light just about anywhere.

It was very hard to get any kind of dramatic feeling in the rooms because we didn't know where the action was going to be. I didn't want to have to go out and start turning on and off

lights when they moved to one corner rather than another; so then the thing was to try and position oneself where the light was best. Also, during the first two weeks of testing lights and testing Billy and Antoinette, I was also testing for where I could shoot and get good results.

Can you say something about choice of camera?

We started with the brand new professional Bolex 16mm self-blinded camera, which had just come over here. It has mechanized zoom, mechanized focus, and detachable magazines, and it all seemed very fancy and very new and very nice. It took a while to get used to it; it's basically a whole different concept because it is all on finger-tip control, rather than manual control. There were certain things wrong with it—the zoom and the focus were on the same motors, and if you wanted a slow zoom and a fast focus, it was impossible, you could only have a slow zoom with a slow focus and vice versa.

During the first days that we used it, we got a particular scratch on the film, and we took it back to the Bolex people. They looked through it, couldn't find anything wrong, and gave it back to us. It ended up that the gate was not set up to use the thicker, softer emulsion stock of 7542; it was too narrow to allow the free passage of the film. The camera we finally chose was the Eclair, which was ideal in fact for the job. When they brought it out years ago, it had certain problems and that's why I never used it before. I only used my own Auricon which I cut down and remade into a shoulder camera. It was balanced very well, and that's why I didn't like the Eclair, because its balance is all forwards, although it is the most comfortable camera there is on the market today for portable hand holding. But I didn't want to use the Auricon because it was even noisier than the Eclair, and it didn't have reflex viewing. The Arriflex BL is just too hard to hold. I don't like being encumbered with shoulder braces, or belly braces of any kind, and the weight of it is certainly something that you can't comfortably hold. It's just too impractical. The brace means you can't get down to get low-angle shots, and you can't bend and get the high-angle shots. You're

strapped into shooting straight in front of you.

What procedures did you set up with Billy and Antoinette?

We went in with a kind of ground rule that we would have no communication with them, nor would they communicate anything to us. We put up an invisible barrier between us, Dutch, myself, and Chris the soundman. If we came at any time, they were not to act surprised or to change what they were doing to something else, and they would not make any exception to what they were doing just because of our presence. We walked in in the middle of the night—so we walked in in the middle of the night, and if we didn't come that day, we didn't come that day. It was just to get them used to us being around, whether we were fiddling with the lights, or whether we were following them around with the camera; it also served the purpose of getting them used to our presence.

How natural were they before the cameras? Did you see a change in them from the beginning to the end? Did you notice things that you would say were put on for you?

The presence of the camera tends to distort at the beginning of any real filming. People are trying their best to be normal people, but in doing so, I would think that the majority of them find they are acting, and we certainly noticed this in the first two or three weeks, but the first two or three weeks are not in the final cut of the film.

Can you give me specific cases?

Some of the dialogue that they would come up with—you could tell that it was for our benefit. Some of the antics that they went through; they are both, as I said before, kind of exhibitionist people. For example, Antoinette might be downstairs in the kitchen and Billy would make his entrance, maybe from work, or from upstairs watching television. If we were filming Antoinette downstairs, he would make an entrance with a terrific wisecrack, or a smash-bang, or bring a beer bottle down and plunk it down in front of Antoinette to make sure that we knew he was there, and to feel that he was making his entrance in the finest possible way. I think that there were times when Antoinette

might have worn a little less make-up toward the beginning of the film. She wasn't quite her natural self—she was doing a fair amount of primping, I guess, mainly when we weren't filming. They were aware of us, they were making jokes to fill time, they couldn't sit quietly for any length of time as normal people would do. Even Billy and Antoinette will sit quietly and not say anything to one another, but in the beginning their time was nearly always full of conversation.

How was the child in the film?

Bogart was excellent. We explained to him the first day we were there what we were going to do—we were going to make a movie in his house, and when we brought the cameras and sound gear in, I explained to him what the camera was, and I let him look through it. But I told him once we started working that he was to leave us alone; and Chris did the same thing—he let him listen in the earphones, and told him that we didn't want him bothering us, and Billy and Antoinette also told him that he was to leave us alone. Bogart did pretty well. Every now and then he would get bored, feel that he wasn't getting enough attention, and he would come over and try and poke his head in the lens but it was very seldom, and certainly not on a crucial occasion.

How long did it take before you think they became relatively natural?

I think it was during the third week. They just seemed to slow down, things weren't so rushed, weren't so hurried, weren't so nervous, and they didn't make so much noise. Maybe they weren't quite so funny when there was no need for it.

How did you set yourself a pattern for shooting and what was your relationship with Allan at this stage?

The first few weeks, Allan was around in the house quite a bit, and he would sometimes go down to the office and screen the previous day's rushes. When he was actually in the house, just sitting in the living room or dining room trying to be inconspicuous, it became very difficult for him because he was just sitting there, and he had nothing to hide behind—he wasn't doing

anything. He couldn't make himself useful in any way, and was just an extra person without a thing. Chris was fine. He could sneak behind his Nagra or fiddle with it; it was something he was doing, rather than sitting nakedly. And I was behind my camera, and could polish the lens if I wasn't shooting anything, or could just sit there. But Allan's presence was a bit inhibiting to Billy and Antoinette because he had nothing to do except just be there, kind of observing. And because he had nothing to do, he was more liable to be brought in or looked at in a way—"Are we doing the right thing now?"

To come back to the selection of what to shoot; you have five or six weeks at the beginning which then extends. How do you know when to make your choice, to turn on and turn off? When Antoinette and Billy are together, it seems obvious that you are there, but when they are separate how do you know which one to stay with?

It was very difficult to start with. I was first trying to see if there was any pattern to what they were doing after dinner. Did Antoinette always go and do the dishes, or did Billy sit down with a magazine, or did he go upstairs? They didn't seem to follow any set pattern, so a lot of the times it was a case of who was doing what. When they were separate, Billy would be upstairs or at work; when they were both in the house, it was a question of who was doing the most interesting thing—how valid was it to what we were doing—was it good to have, should we cover it, how well will it develop. I think these are the key words in the kind of shooting we were doing: "Will it develop into anything?" and secondly "Can you possibly use it for a cutaway, or maybe just a silent music-over sequence?" Are they doing something alone which can be used to show something significant about their joint lives; or can it be used as just a simple little sequence by itself of something beautiful and softening, that's happening? So you take it from there. Perhaps we would shoot Antoinette in the kitchen for a while, but we wouldn't know what Billy was doing upstairs; so we would make sure and first cover the sequence of what Antoinette was do-

ing, and then we'd beat it upstairs and see what Billy was doing in case we needed some of that to go with what Antoinette was doing.

Normally if you were working as the photographer you concentrate on what is within your frame and the director can concentrate on what is being said; here, you had to combine the two. Had you done much of this kind of thing before—was it an extra problem?

I must say that I have kind of conditioned myself to do it because that is the kind of filming I have done, and have done well. It's a matter of anticipating a movement, anticipating what's going to come next, where your dialogue might come from. You find if you shoot a classroom in a similar way you immediately sort out the guys who are going to be the first to put their hands up. You sense this so that you can almost get there before them. But it's hard because you're not ready most of the time. You just try and out guess them, or first-guess them.

Could you say something about shooting with only one camera, and things only happening once?

When shooting with only one camera, there are no chances for retakes, there is no chance for questions being asked again—it is a one-shot thing. And you also have to cover yourself so that the film will cut. In many occasions Billy and Antoinette would get into a discussion across the room, one sitting on one side and the other sitting on the other side. You cannot bear to be continually panning back and forth unless the action needs it, unless the action really necessitates it. If the action is fast and furious you can only gain by some quick pans back and forth, but basically if you can see something starting, if you can anticipate that this is going to be an argument, and this is going to be a fairly important argument—they have been needing around, they've been at it for awhile, and they've settled themselves in for it—then you have to cover yourself and listen very hard to what they are saying. You try to get what is important to be in synch on frame, and when you can sneak off and get the silent cutaways of the other one, and try not to lose too much important synch dialogue.

Can we come down to some particular things about the film. There are a number of very intimate sequences in the film, such as the bedroom sequences. Did you find the camera interfering with the reactions of Billy and Antoinette?

In the first bedroom scene, both of them were very self-conscious about us being there, and whether they should or could make love before us. The first intimate scene in the film, was actually the first time that we did any long shooting in the bedroom, and there was a certain amount of tomfoolery. The lights were very hot, and I really didn't have them set the way I would like to have had them, had I been able to shoot up there previously, or had more time to reset them. It was a very hard, overall light, not at all a dramatic light, and here was Billy and Antoinette in bed—with Billy trying to get sexy toward his wife. He didn't know how far he was going to go, and she certainly didn't feel like she wanted to have anything to do with it. It was a time when I found that the camera was at its noisiest, and that the floors squeaked every time we moved to get another angle.

Where, in fact were you shooting from?

I was shooting from bedside, very close to bedside. I guess I wasn't more than four feet from the bed at any time, except for wide cover shots, for which I went back and shot through the door. Christian, I think, was as embarrassed as they were or I was, and was trying to get the sound without being any closer than he needed to be. It was my first encounter with that kind of a scene in a real situation, and I just found that it wasn't going to happen. There was nothing more going to happen. They weren't going to make love for us, or for themselves—it was too difficult—and I decided that there was not much sense in staying on any longer with them.

How could you judge when it was appropriate to shoot in the bedroom?

Well, when they had a particularly good day, and felt very kind toward each other I sometimes sensed I might get something important upstairs. For instance, the night they got the stereo set, and were having a marvelous time, and were both very happy. Without really

thinking about it, we knew we would stay. You could stay to a point, but when there was nothing else coming, my reasoning was that you had to leave. Otherwise you were forcing them to do something that perhaps they didn't want to do, and if you got it, how real was it? If they had made love for us in front of the camera, I'd have wondered how much they were forcing it, and whether it was really necessary, and I think that my whole thing is that it wasn't really necessary—at least not within our film. There were many happier times that were easier to film that come across with more "togetherness" than the bedroom scene.

When you weren't filming, and were just sitting around, at what point did you make a decision, "Let's turn it on?" Can you give me a specific case?

The dinner table was one of the biggest action spots for us. Dinner might start in the usual manner, but it was the place where most things were discussed. We never missed a dinner or evening meal. The events of the day would be gone over, and you'd set the scene. You would shoot cover shots just in case something came up, and you wanted the table with them bringing the food on. We would make sure we got some cover shot so as to set whatever outfit they were wearing, and to try and keep some semblance of continuity. Billy might come on with, "Well, what did you do today?" You could almost sense when this was going to happen, and we'd shoot that. Then they would go on idly about Antoinette, maybe she went to Mary Jane's blah, blah, and you could tell there wasn't anything. I guess a lot of the times we missed the important question from either one or the other. The food for the dog sequence comes to mind. Billy was angry when he came in—he was angry from work, I can't remember why, but I know he was angry—and I knew that something was going to happen. We didn't shoot for a while, and it was kind of a silent meal, not like usual, and I guess maybe it was second sense, or maybe I just turned on because he was chewing his food rather strangely. It's something you watch for.

There are two things, or three things, that

look as if they might have been set up, and I wonder if you can comment on them. One is Billy always appearing in his underwear; the second thing is the scene where Antoinette is scratching her crotch in a pretty unladylike way; and the third one is the shooting at the Café de la Paix, where Antoinette talks about sex to her girlfriend.

Billy was quite comfortable wandering around the house in his altogether. When he comes home from work, he immediately strips—this was almost a ritual with him. He wears red shorts, I guess he has 7 or 8 pairs of them. They weren't set up by us for color coordination or anything like that. He said do you want me to wander around naked, or do you think I should wear a pair of shorts; and our feeling was, that unreal as it might be, let's cover you up in a pair of shorts. But it certainly was not set up, and I am sure if Billy had had his way he would have been naked most of the time. The first week we were shooting, we were there for morning wakeup and Billy got out of bed and tramped around the house, went down and called the dog, and then went out in the backyard and played with the dog—all this completely naked; we felt that maybe that particular thing was set up for us—maybe he was doing it for our benefit—but it was just Billy acting normally.

Antoinette scratching—I guess she did a lot of things like that, and I suppose it was her nature. There's another scene of her pulling the hair under her armpits that one critic took exception to in New York. It is a thing Antoinette does. Her scratching her leg or her crotch, I never took it as anything else. Maybe she was trying to provoke Billy, but she has a number of mannerisms like that, and maybe it is part of her make-up as a woman who likes to do these kinds of things to provoke, or maybe it's just a nice feeling for her.

Café de la Paix was set up. We asked Antoinette to invite one of her friends whom she confided in, so that we would have a background on their marriage.

Did you tell her what to talk about?

No, not in any real terms. We told her that

we would like the two of them to talk about Antoinette's feelings. Perhaps her friend, Mary Jane could question her on this. We wanted them just to talk about the background and present feelings of Antoinette towards Billy and thought that perhaps this could be brought out by a second person. We shot an awful lot that afternoon, about two and a half hours of them chit-chatting. I had a pair of earphones because I was back too far to hear what they were talking about, and tried to pick my shots, and anticipate where the action was going to come from. Allan was also listening on a set of earphones. At one time he did in fact interrupt, when their conversation was drifting, and asked them to get back to what was more pertinent, which was the subject of Billy and Antoinette.

Once the filming was beginning to develop, did you see the rushes, or did Allan ask you to concentrate on any one particular thing or another?

I guess to begin with, we had fights. We had fights over color stocks, we had fights about what we should be filming, but they weren't fights, they were just talks. Finally we did get it over with one night when I asked Allan what I should be shooting, and he said, "What you are shooting is really fine, but you're being a bit hasty—you're not staying long enough with the subject, you're not staying long enough for the sequence to develop. Be a little more selective, be a little more steady, in terms of holding onto a subject before you go back. Don't be so anxious to cover yourself because you're missing what might be a lot of the real action—you can afford to stay on Antoinette even if she is not saying something and Billy is, but try and *think* more." He's good like that, he will seldom call you down, but he will make it seem that maybe you're doing the wrong thing, or you're being a little hasty or something like that.

What did you find the most difficult scene to shoot?

The most physically difficult, as far as setup of the thing goes, was the car fight where they are in the living room—one is on the red couch, and one is on the gold couch. Neither was in a particularly good position for light, and the

spread of the room was too great to follow the dialogue easily on camera or mike. Chris was using the 804 microphone, and he would have to move it around, and try and anticipate them; he couldn't follow my directions because sometimes I was picking up or getting ready for a reaction shot while the dialogue was still going on, and I wanted him to stay on the active line, while I got ready for the reaction. I couldn't shoot it standing up because the angle just didn't look very good; I couldn't cross the axis at this point to get a new angle because there was no way of doing it continuously, and without interrupting their line of thought. If I walked in front of them, or walked between them, I didn't feel it would have done any of us any good. They would have been broken up a bit just because of it, although they would have covered well, I am sure. The one blessing of that whole sequence, which went on for about an hour and a half, was when the phone rang, and I could follow Antoinette out. At the phone I could then flip around and shoot the reaction of Billy, and still have enough time to get back to Antoinette hanging up and saying goodbye. I could then take up a new angle as I followed Antoinette back into the room. I guess the second most difficult scene was the bedroom sequence where they are both trying very hard to get to where they're at, to a point almost embarrassing to both of them, and I had a feeling myself that they weren't getting anywhere. They would break and go down and have a coke or something, and I would follow them down, and I felt very sad, and very sympathetic to both of them.

What about the shooting of the party?

Had we been able to use the party in Maine, maybe just as a half-hour film by itself, it might have been great because there were a lot of things happening. There was this guy Bill painting away, and Billy was taking photographs of Bill painting; plus there was a party going on in the other part of the building and people were being very intellectual and doing all kinds of hand movements, drinking and smoking, and it was fine that way. But when it came down to Antoinette's flirtation with the chap in the red

shirt, that was hard, because we had to establish them sitting there, we had to establish that the rest of the party was going on, and there was a terrific clatter that Chris had trouble with. Meanwhile, in the back, Billy was going somewhere or doing something when a lot of the pertinent stuff between Antoinette and Red Shirt was taking place. Billy, in fact, was disengaging himself from the whole party, and doing his own thing, taking stills with his camera.

Had you forewarned the people at the party?

Yes, we asked them to have a party, and get their friends around. It was set up for the purpose of filming the contemporaries that Billy and Antoinette socialized with, to let the audience know that their friends were a bit kooky. But I am sure there would have been a party sooner or later.

Could you say something about filming what I call the "record love sequence?"

This is one where they got the stereo set and the Beatle records. They had bought a hi-fi, and Billy brought it home, and they talked about getting the records. We shot them right through, from the beginning of Billy bringing in the cartons and opening them up, and there was an air of excitement. They hadn't had any kind of record player in the house, and they both dug music, so it was kind of exciting, and it was going to be nice. They put on the records, they started dancing—the dancing is great, the music is great, how can anything be any better, but how could you do the shots without getting in their way. We did all the usual shots, low-angle shots, shots up between them, holding the camera above them, getting close—I guess that's where the window came in for variety. The particular choice of where the music stopped fitted in quite well, and using the music, through the window to me was very exciting. That was just a beautiful sequence!

What about arguments between a camera-man and director in the sense that the camera-man thinks he has a magnificent series of shots, and the director doesn't want to use them. Was there any sequence you would like to have seen used purely from a photographic point of view?



FICTION DOCUMENTARY

I guess the most significant thing in that kind of shooting is the trust the director has in the camera crew, and the confidence that the cameraman has in the director, that the director is telling him the truth, that what he is doing is right or wrong. There's also the question of trust and confidence between the crew and the principals. I guess one of the nicest things in this regard happened at the end of shooting, when both Billy and Antoinette said "We could never have done this film with anyone else," which meant to me that we had done the right thing.

THE EDITOR: ARLA SAARE

Yes. There was another dance, done that same stereo night, which I liked very much. They were just kind of fooling around, and just swinging each other round and round and I framed so that you would see Billy's full face grinning away, and the next moment with a natural wipe of hair or something, you see Antoinette coming in and filling the same frame, and I went across her, and you get them going away from each other. I argued a fair bit about those, and Allan had them both in to start with, but there wasn't room for them, and he took that one out. I am glad he left the one he did in, but I was sorry to see the other one go. Another one was in Maine, down by the water front of the little town they were in. They were walking around, looking at boats, and the color of it seemed just very soft. It was a bit blue—it wasn't color-color, but had a very pleasant atmosphere to it.

In terms of color did you tell Billy or Antoinette what to wear?

No, only on a couple of occasions for continuity's sake—Allan would ask Billy to wear a particular suit and shirt to the office, and maybe he would ask Antoinette to come downstairs in the morning wearing a particular dressing gown or housecoat to try and keep a bit of continuity from a scene that he had seen in the rushes that he felt might be quite pertinent.

Are there any things about the photography or direction that we haven't gone over?

I started as a medical photographer in a hospital. During the war I applied to the National Film Board which was being organized under John Grierson, and started as a cutter; I then went into the optical and special effects department (fades, dissolves, special effects of all kinds, shooting animation) and shot some of McLaren's early animation on the animation stand. When the CBC started in Toronto in 1952, I applied there as an editor, and worked there for a year cutting news, news magazines, sport shows. Then when Vancouver television opened up, I transferred over, and it was there that we set up a small, very active film unit—Ron Kelly was there, Darrel Duke, Allan King, and various other young film enthusiasts. After a while, most of the film work came to be based on Toronto, so I left the CBC and came here as a free-lancer. At that point, I worked on mostly CBC shows, for three years. I was doing "Telescopes," which is a documentary style mostly centered on some prominent person—a profile. I did various shows, *Open Grave* for instance, hour-long shows for Intertel, a Nature series, and so on.

How long have you been associated with Allan King?

I met Allan in Vancouver in 1964 where I cut his film *Skid Row*. Then when *A Married Couple* came up, he asked me if I would cut it, but the CBC wouldn't release me, so dear old Allan waited for five months for me to get free of my contract.

Could you give me your method of working with Allan on this film?

I suppose in a sense this was quite different from any other kind of film I've done, because Allan had screened all 63 hours of the film many times. The first 10 hours were not acceptable technically, and possibly also from the point of view of the two people involved; and so when I first began to work with Allan, it was rather strange. Normally I would screen a film with a director, and if he had a point of view, or a structure, he would explain it, and let me carry on; after a rough assembly he would look at it, make some changes before the fine cut, and then the film would be frozen. But in this instance, I found it rather curious that Allan and I would sit here, and he would say, "Well now, roll 102 has some interesting stuff, let's look at it." He wouldn't look at the film on the Moviola, but would watch my reaction to it. He knew pretty well what he wanted, I think, but he was interested in having a fresh point of view, maybe even a woman's point of view, I don't know, but I could see him watching me rather intently, and if I reacted favorably, it was put aside, and we would say then, "Let's use this."

Can you recall some of the favorable and unfavorable reactions?

I suppose what always interested me in screening the rushes was the sense of humor through the whole thing, and the quickness of the repartee. I would often laugh uproariously at the Moviola, certainly on the opening, when Billy and Antoinette close the door on the outside world, and start talking about the harpsichord. I felt that was a very good opening because it showed both of them sort of egging the other on and laughing at each other, and just seeing how far each could push the other.

You said a moment ago you couldn't use things because they were technically wrong, but also because they were wrong from the point of view of Billy and Antoinette. Can you think of anything which you considered was wrong or in bad taste and therefore not used?

I can't think of anything that was in bad taste. I'm simply speaking in terms of interest within a situation. Something would develop and not

carry through; a great deal of the footage was very boring. For instance, the general routine of the marriage—the cooking, the cleaning, and reading the paper, the tantrums of little Bogart, people calling—all that sort of general routine that had to be covered in order to get a broad picture of their married life. Some of it was good but a lot of it was extremely boring.

Okay, so you take out 10 or so hours. Where do you go from there?

Then we started to pull out all the things that interested us, and to assemble them. We tried right off to have some sort of vague general order, or general structure.

Did you order that structure, or did Allan compose that structure?

Allan did it originally, in order for us to have a starting point. He said, "Now I think we might begin here, and go on to here, and here," and so on; and certainly, at the very beginning, his structure was wrong. From the show-biz point of view, he felt that right off the bat we should have a violent argument. However, we could see in our first three-and-a-half hour screening that it was too violent. Possibly four of us looked at the very rough assembly of all the material that Allan and I found interesting, and it was apparent, even before we pared it down, that our major problem was going to be structure.

So you pulled all the interesting material, and cut it into sequences without having any idea as to the eventual order?

Yes, we cut it into sequences because of the way it was shot—possibly ten minutes on one segment without a camera stop. Allan and I would view it on the Moviola and say, "Out of this ten minutes, the first three minutes is good, and then it goes flat, so let's take out a minute there, and pick it up again, and pick this up"; and out of the ten minutes, we would possibly end up with five minutes, without any sort of refinement whatsoever. The segments we chose had to interest us from some point of view—humor, violence and antagonism, tenderness, whatever.

You then have twenty or thirty segments which you can label violence or humor and put on rolls?

They weren't really labelled violence or humor or tenderness; they were labelled strangely enough: "Argument about a Harpsichord"; or "Lunch at the Café de la Paix—Antoinette and her friend"; or "Playing horsey with Bogart"; or "Petula Clark, dance record."

How did you decide on the beginning and the end of the film?

Well the beginning remained pretty well the way we had started originally. It was very difficult to find the beginning. It's so much easier in a film that is structured from the very beginning; in one minute, you can set a scene. When there is no structure, when it is *vérité*, it takes much longer because the scenes aren't shot in that way, and therefore, you have to find some device.

You start with the discussion about the harpsichord. Had you any alternatives for the beginning in mind?

We had three. Allan originally thought we should begin right off the bat and show an argument. Then he also toyed with the idea of beginning with that wonderful scene where Antoinette is sitting on Billy's lap and they are playing *The Magic Flute*, and she is weeping. Allan wanted to begin with that but then he thought, that will put off the average movie-going audience: who knows *The Magic Flute*, and what kind of arty film is this? So we stayed with the discussion about the harpsichord at the beginning. It was a little stilted, but I think it had humor to it, and right off the bat, they go upstairs and go to bed; and we begin to see a little bit of their problems about marriage, because Antoinette doesn't want Billy to bother her. Of course, at that point, we have to see what the house is like, find the child, see the dog, see what kind of a job he has, what kind of a person she is. This originally was quite long, and involved the boring mechanics of setting the scene, what kind of house they have and so on, and showing their status.

How far does Allan work over you, and how does he leave you alone?

Normally, directors and producers leave me very much alone, but in this instance, because Allan was so conversant with the whole topic of

the marriage in crisis, and I'm a single person, I never argued with him, because I could never find anything to argue with—except possibly later on. At our first screening with a large audience (maybe 30 people) it was quite evident that the film was sympathetic to Antoinette, and Billy was terribly unlikeable. And so at that point, Allan said, "We must soften Billy, get more interesting stuff of Billy, and cut Antoinette down a bit, so there will be more of a balance." Then Allan and I looked at all the materials that we had discarded, and were able jointly, and with no argument, to say, "This is just great, he looks fine here, he's sympathetic, he's funny, a little pathetic."

Can you give me an example of material which you added to make Billy appear more sympathetic?

There's a wonderful scene where they have unpacked their stereo equipment and are playing records and dancing. They are both very gay, and having a lot of fun, and then at the end of it, they go upstairs and to bed, and he sits on her bed and he says, "There are only three things in life I want, fame," (fame is what he wants most—I've forgotten the other two) and she says, "Not me, I want people to like me." He says, "You're such a liar, you want fame too, you want everyone around to say, 'There she is, there she goes, the beautiful Mrs. Edwards'." Obviously she is very desirable to him at that moment, so he picks her up and takes her into the master bed, and pleads with her to please stay there but she says, "Why do I have to stay here? Why can't I sleep in my own bed—for weeks you let me sleep in my own bed." Billy is still pleading with her, and she says, "That was the answer when we first got married, that was the answer—separate bedrooms," but that was ten years ago. So he was very pleading and very soft and I think it gave a full dimension at that point that we needed very badly.

Are you saying that the whole of this sequence was only inserted at a later stage?

Yes. It's a beautiful sequence, and I don't know why we didn't include it earlier. I suppose we were so interested in the car fight, and that terrible fight that still sends shivers up my spine

where he throws her out of the house. Another sequence we added later was that charming sequence about the new regime: "There's going to be a new thing in this house, we are going to sprinkle spiritual Lux around," that was added at a later time. In effect, we were adding a gay later sequence, and a little gay, soft, sympathetic to Billy sequence.

What were the other sequences that were filmed, but which you decided not to use?

There was one sequence that I was desperately anxious to have in. At the end of the party, in Maine, they go to bed, and it's 4 o'clock in the morning, and Antoinette says, "Bring the clock," and he says, "What do you want the clock for?" and she says, "So I can see what time it is when we get up," and he says, "I'm not going to bring it," and she snuggles down in bed, and says, "Bring it," and he says, "I won't"; she says, "You jerk." The whole sequence was so gay and so delightful that I hated to lose it. I suppose it was mostly the quality of the shooting, and the iron bedstead, and it was so obviously a cottage, and they had had a good time at the party and most of all Antoinette was so delighted to go to bed so late, and wanted that clock so badly, and he wouldn't bring it.

Allan said it was very difficult to cut the party sequence; can you explain why?

The party sequence gave us more trouble than anything else because we were trying to show Antoinette being very interested in another man. When we were looking at the rushes they lasted for a good hour. (Of her talking to this other guy at the party.) She was putting on for him, and he was interested in her, and there was the play of hands, and the unconscious play with wedding rings, and she was looking terribly sexy. Looking at this, it was so obvious to us that she was putting herself on for this man, that she was fascinated by him, and he was by her, but when it came to cutting it down, and telescoping it into four or five minutes, nothing worked. The sex part didn't come out, her dress slowly falling off, and this playing with wedding rings—nothing worked. I had it cut, I would say four times, and put everything back where it was originally, and we looked at

it again, and tried to find other segments of it that would bring out this strange sort of interlude. But we couldn't make it work. Finally, we made it work by having Patricia Watson come in, and look at it with us again, and strangely in the end it did work, but not because we used the most sexy scenes, but because we used lines that had no real meaning at all. Pat suggested this business of taking sentences that really had no meaning, and putting them together so that we weren't following what they were saying so much as just watching. Originally, our problem had been one of trying to make their conversation make sense.

Can we talk about problems of structure?

I would say that, next to the party sequence in Maine, structure gave us the most trouble. We had three or four or five major ingredients. We had the car fight which was terribly important; we had the record-return fight, which was important; we had the lovely tender scene that was important. Originally, the tender scene followed a party in Toronto, and that party was shot by Richard, and obviously he wasn't interested in the party.

What do you call the lovely tender scene?

Where she is sitting on his lap and they are playing *The Magic Flute*. It now follows the sequence in Maine, so of course, we had to move that around. But the party in Toronto, as far as I was concerned, was a disaster—I couldn't make anything work in it, and it wasn't important anyway. We had trouble locating the tender scene, but it made sense to us to have it follow the party in Maine. In other words, you can take what you like out of why she is crying, after her session with the other man. As a viewer, and as an editor, I would say that when Antoinette is sitting on Billy's lap, weeping, and we hear the lovely *Magic Flute*, we take it—or I take it, as I think most of the audience takes it—that she regrets the session with the young attractive man whom she has just had a strange conversation with, and she regrets the misunderstandings and arguments that they have, and so in effect, she is weeping for everything that takes them apart from each other.

This of course, is fiction documentary, and

you put things together nonchronologically. Do you think that the audience has realized this is not a chronological sequence?

I am sure that the audience doesn't realize this, and I don't see why they should. I don't see why we shouldn't present something that makes sense in some form of structure of our own, because we can all take out of this film what we choose to take out of it, but I think it's rather wonderful that we were able to make that one scene so poignant by having it follow a flirtation scene—and she is a real flirt in that scene.

Did you have difficulties with the ending?

No, there were no alternative endings. The problem was where to put the car fight. We juggled, I would say for a good six weeks, Allan and I. We juggled the car fight, we had it early, we had it late, and finally we realized that we would have to have it within the first third of the film, in order to give the film strength and to give the film a meaning, because there were so many sequences in the film that were either just funny or routine, things that we had to get out of the way.

Coming back to basic problems of cutting, if you have say a ten-minute sequence, do you work from a transcript on which Allan underlines, "cut from here to here," or are you just looking at the viewer, and say, "All right we'll take it from here, from this point to this point?"

No, Allan and I screened every sequence pretty thoroughly, and on the Moviola we made up our minds as to where we should begin, and what segment out of that we would use. We had transcripts to work from, and of course originally we had chosen very long sequences, but after it was pared down, we were able to cut it rather finely. In fact it was very difficult to cut. Normally one's angle changes so often in a feature film. You have so many choices—you can do over-the-shoulder shots, you can go in for a close-up, you can get reaction shots, everything—but in this film, that was impossible, because the camera, although it was moving, didn't change framing that often; and so if we removed ten seconds here, and thirty seconds there, it caused great problems.

Normally, I would assume you would start your editing while the filming was still going on.

So the editor can say to the photographer, I want this and this additional. Now here, the filming had been completely finished.

The filming had been completely finished and the footage had been sitting for roughly four or five months before we started on it. But in no way was this a director's film. Allan will verify this—he sat out in the hallway most of the time, because he didn't want to intrude. I think in only one instance was there any direction at all, any set up, and that was when Antoinette was in the Café de la Paix talking to her friend about her marriage. A lot of people have picked this up as one aspect of the film that doesn't ring true, that looks like an interview, and I think they are right.

If you had been around while Richard was shooting, is there anything you would have asked him for which would have made your editing task simpler?

No. There was no way I could say, "Richard, get me that close-up of Bogart at the table, get me this and get me that"—there was just nothing, no way, with all the shooting that was going on, no way I could possibly have foreseen.

What were the changes made between rough cut and fine cut?

Mostly paring out unessential setting-up scenes, mostly paring down within a sequence, cutting down the car fight (as fascinating as it was, I think possibly it is still a little long), altering structure. Where do we have a beginning and an end, how do we progress through it, how do we keep humor, argument, that whole very delicate balance of keeping a film moving. For a long time, we thought of having a flashback to Maine by using a sort of standard technique of showing slides, so we could see slides on the screen, and then get to the holiday in Maine and the swim, but that proved to be too artificial.

You said that this was very different from the way you normally cut a film.

Normally, cutting say a half-hour film for television, a director would come to me, and I would see with him possibly 10,000 feet of film, and he would say, "This is what interested me about this man, these are the things I liked; I've shot this of him for you walking through the

woods, and I've shot this, and I've got a shot showing him painting, and talking about his interests and his hobbies." It would then be up to me to structure it from there, and I would always have complete freedom except for a few changes that the director or producer would suggest. Within three weeks, the film would be finished, and it would be mostly my structure. But *A Married Couple* was so different because it needed the director and myself to talk constantly about the impact of scenes, to discuss structure, to cut it down where we felt either one was being maligned, or not being fair to another person. It was much more a twosome in this marriage film than any other film I had worked on.

What would you say was the biggest satisfaction you got out of this film?

When Allan first showed me the rushes, and asked me if I would cut it, he showed me the car fight, and I listened to it and I was horrified. I was taken aback by the language, taken back by the arguments, and I really disliked the couple. But at the end of the film I knew that, under my hand, we had isolated segments out of two people's lives, in a rather cohesive order, and it showed Billy and Antoinette in a very sympathetic light; and I think the film has charm, humor, violence, and that they are two very ordinary, very wonderful people.

JAY LEYDA

Between Explosions

(AN ATTEMPT TO REPAIR A MISTAKEN JUDGEMENT)

The patriotism and national pride aroused in the Soviet Union by its defense against German aggression may account for the drastic postwar reevaluation of the prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian cinema. The historical value of reestablishing this cultural link is now generally recognized among Soviet writers who are concerned with film criticism, analysis, and history. The work of Bauer and Chardynin, among other prerevolutionary film-makers, can be examined today with respect—and that particular struggle against a mechanical division has been won.

There is, however, another division that remains, unjustly and harmfully. All accounts of Soviet film history (including my own*) display a too easy and complacent assumption related

to the first years of Soviet films: that the films produced by state organizations were the only Soviet films in these years, and that the films made by private firms (which continued to work in Moscow, in the Ukraine, and on the Crimean coast) are merely remnants of a past that could not or should not be compared with the *genuine* Soviet films. Exceptions to this rule can be found, of course; Mayakovsky did most of his film work in these years for Neptune, a private firm with a reactionary reputation, yet his films are discussed as *Soviet* films.

Such exceptions, or indeed any second glance at our assumption, shatter this old generalization, or at the very least make one suspect it. At one time there may have been no opportunity to see whatever films survived from this period. Yet even without this opportunity, certain questions bubble up to the top of the mind.

**Kino, a History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London, 1960).